

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES



MEDFORD
OREGON

September 10, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Prescott Room, Medford Police Station

219 S. Ivy Street, Medford, Oregon

The special meeting of the Medford City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Prescott Room of Medford Police Station on the above date with the following members and staff present:

Mayor Gary Wheeler; Councilmembers Clay Bearnson (arrived at 6:22 p.m.), Kay Brooks, Tim D'Alessandro, Dick Gordon, Eric Stark, Kevin Stine, Michael Zarosinski; City Manager Brian Sjothun, Deputy City Manager Kelly Madding, City Attorney Rick Whitlock, Deputy City Recorder Winnie Shepard; Councilmember Alex Poythress was absent.

20. Recognitions, Community Group Reports

None.

30. Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience

None.

40. Approval or Correction of the Minutes

None.

50. Consent Calendar

None.

60. Items Removed from Consent Calendar

None.

70. Ordinances and Resolutions

80.3 COUNCIL BILL 2020-124

A RESOLUTION ratifying the Mayor's Administrative Order dated September 9, 2020 for a Declaration of a Local State of Emergency in the City of Medford as a Result of the Alameda Fire in effect through October 8, 2020.

Motion: Approve Council Bill 2020-124.

Moved by: Kay Brooks

Seconded by: Kevin Stine

Roll call: Councilmembers Kay Brooks, Tim D'Alessandro, Dick Gordon, Eric Stark, Kevin Stine, Michael Zarosinski voting yes.

Council Bill 2020-124 approved.

80. Public Hearings

None.

90. Council Business

90.1 Committee Reports and Communications

- a. Council Officers Update
None.

100. City Manager and Staff Reports

City Manager Brian Sjothun, Fire Chief Eric Thompson, Police Chief Scott Clauson, Deputy City Manager Kelly Madding, Communications and Marketing Manager Kristina Johnsen, and Emergency Manager Aaron Ott provided an update on the fire and community outreach regarding area fires.

Agencies from across southern Oregon worked together to extinguish the fires, however the significant winds, lack of humidity and dry climate caused the fire to move too quickly. Assistance was requested from the state and an incident management team was dispatched to help. Fire management was officially transferred to the state around 1:30 a.m. Wednesday.

The extent of property damage is unknown, however media releases indicate at least 600 homes and 100 businesses were destroyed.

*Councilmember Bearnson arrived at 6:22 p.m.

Councilmembers voiced many concerns regarding the lack of information provided to residents. Area briefings are held daily and media releases are distributed around 2:00 p.m. every day. A media release is planned, notifying people that they should not return to evacuated areas due to safety concerns with gas lines and other utilities. Staff is also working to obtain the ability to distribute updates through the Everbridge system.

Staff agreed that more information and updates could have been publicized, however it was difficult to obtain information from the state or county. The City communicated updates from the County as they became available through designated communication channels. To improve communication, local agencies created a Public Information Officer group which collaborated and compiled the most common questions into a fact sheet. The fact sheet is continuously updated, date stamped and sent to all agencies to ensure data is current. A missing person hotline was also established.

There have been many difficulties to divert traffic out of areas, resulting in the inability for emergency vehicles to access the fires; this was a major factor in the spread of the fires.

There are ongoing investigations regarding the sources of the fires. The District Attorney's Office has advised that they will prosecute arsonists and looters with the highest level charges. Police have investigated the rumors that Antifa started the fires, and those accusations were determined to be baseless.

City staff has been inundated with map questions and evacuation updates. The state is managing the fire; law enforcement and Jackson County Emergency Management are managing evacuations. The City is directing many calls to the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.

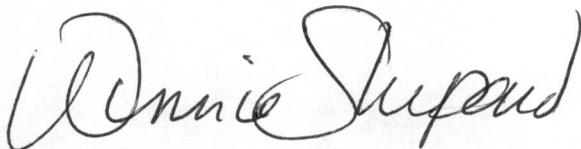
The City is focusing on services like emergency parking, shelters and other resources in the area. There are multiple locations providing overnight parking and temporary shelter, however they are not equipped for long-term sheltering. City staff is currently looking for creative ways to provide housing for people displaced from these fires. Medford will significantly relax the restrictions on RV camping in the right-of-way or on private property; parking lots are opening for people to sleep in their cars; people are contacting the City offering rooms to those in need. Staff is working with FEMA to arrange housing and services, however it is estimated that temporary housing from FEMA would not be available for three to six months.

Council discussed a rent increase moratorium.

110. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

The proceedings of the City Council meeting were recorded and are filed in the City Recorder's Office. The complete agenda of this meeting is filed in the City Recorder's Office.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Winnie Shepard".

Winnie Shepard, CMC
Deputy City Recorder